



## Figure of Speech Used in The Song Lyrics of John Legend Album “Bigger Love”

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out the types of figure of speech used in the song lyric of John Legend album Bigger Love. The data were analyzed by using the theory proposed by Knickerbocker and Rreninger (1963). In analyzing the data, this study uses observation method in collecting the data and descriptive method uses in analyzing the data. The result of this study showed that six types of figure of speech used in the song lyric of John Legend album Bigger Love, that there were 21 data the figure of speech used in the song lyric of John Legend album Bigger Love, those are 6 simile, 2 metaphor, 3 personification, 1 synecdoche, 8 hyperbole, 1 paradox.

**Keywords:** *figurative language, song lyric, and meaning.*

### Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis majas yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu album John Legend Bigger Love. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori yang dikemukakan oleh Knickerbocker dan Rreninger (1963). Dalam menganalisis data, penelitian ini menggunakan metode observasi dalam mengumpulkan data dan metode deskriptif dalam menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa enam jenis majas yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu album John Legend Bigger Love, yaitu terdapat 21 data majas yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu album John Legend Bigger Love, yaitu 6 simile, 2 metafora, 3 personifikasi, 1 sinekdok, 8 hiperbola, 1 paradoks

**Kata kunci:** *bahasa kiasan, lirik lagu, dan makna.*

### Introduction

Language is a traditional system of spoken or written symbols that people use to communicate with each other. People need language to communicate, interact and get information from others. Today, people can talk to others through songs. Through songs, one can convey one's voice to many, and one can know one's feelings. Currently, there are many songs that can express our feelings, such as theme songs for love, socializing, and politics. As far as we know that song is a part of literature.

According to Meyer (1997: 1) literature is a term used to describe written texts characterized by careful use of language, including features such as creative metaphors, well transformed phrases, elegant syntax, rhyme, alliteration, which are aesthetically readable. Or intended by someone else. The author to be read aesthetically and deliberately somewhat open to interpretation. Song is an example of a literary work. Song is the act or art of singing. Songs as musical works with sung words have a function to express thoughts and feelings. Songs have two elements, such as lyrics and music.

The songs usually consist of figurative language because figurative language is used in well written lyrics. The descriptive words of figurative language have meanings in other than literal meanings, even those words convey the exact meaning. Based on these reasons, it brings the authors to conduct research to analyze. In this study, the writer analyzes the figure of speech in the lyrics of the song John Legend. Song lyrics are short poems in several stanzas set with the music to be sung. In writing, songwriters or composers usually embellish the language they use with any figurative language, so that listeners will be more interested in listening to the song. Basically, figurative language is part of semantics. As you know, semantics can be used to find out the true meaning of a song. When listening to a song, someone may not be able to focus on the lyrics used in the song, especially if the song contains figurative elements. Usually they like it because they like music or because they like singers. It is important to know the meaning of the lyrics of the song, as we know the meaning and purpose of the song.

Reaske (1996: 27) states that figurative languages are languages that use different idioms. Figurative languages are a type of language that differs from languages that use traditional literal methods to describe people who use objects. Usually, writers immediately use a figurative or literal language. Also, according to Croft (2000: 56), figurative words are symbolic or figurative and should not be interpreted literally. As Blood Fort T. Stull describes in his book *Elements of Figurative Language*, figurative language is language that avoids speaking directly or frankly about the subject being examined. This theory helps researchers to answer the research questions of this study. There are many kinds of figurative language in this theory.

This study was conducted by reading and reviewing some references that related to figurative language. The first study conducted by Maftuhah (2018) entitled “Figurative Language in Selected Brian McKnight’s Song” The second study was conducted by Habibi (2016) entitled “An Analysis Figurative Language in Endesor Novel by Andrea Hirarta”. The third study conducted by Manuaba, Sudana and Tika (2019) entitled “Figurative Language in Weslife album Coast to Coast and My Chemical Romance Album Welcome to Black Parade”. Based on the previous related literature above, the similarity is discussed about figurative language in the song lyric. And the differences is data source.

## Methodology

In conducting this study, the method of collecting the data used observation method and the method of analyzing the data is with descriptive method. The data collected from finding song lyric in album “Bigger Love” by John Legend, the steps were collecting the data was begun by finding the song’s lyric in the internet, listening to the songs carefully and repeatedly to understand the content of the songs, reading the lyrics carefully while listening to the songs, taking note to the classifying the data based on the types of figure of speech. The data were analyzed based on theory types of figure of speech proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963). The finding presented in two methods, the formal method and informal method.

## Result and discussion

The finding of this study show that the types of figure of speech used in the song lyrics of John Legend album *Bigger Love*, they are six types of figure of speech used in the song lyric of John Legend album *Bigger Love*: simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, hyperbole, paradox. The table below presents six types of figurative language used in the song lyric of John Legend.

No.	Types of Figure of speech	Occurence	Percentage
1.	Simile	6	36, 64%
2.	Metaphor	2	9, 09%
3.	Personification	3	13, 36%
4.	Synecdoche	1	4, 55%
5	Hyperbole	8	27, 73 %
6	Paradox	1	4, 55%
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

This part discussed the types and meaning of figure of speech used in the song lyrics of John Legend. There are 12 examples of figure of speech will be presented in discussion. The analysis of the figure of speech consist, 3 simile, 2 metaphor, 2 personification, 1 synecdoche, 3 hyperbole, and 1 irony. The discussion can be seen as follows:

### 1. Simile

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963: 367) Simile is a stated comparison, introduced by *like or as*.

#### Data 1

I don't wanna think about nothing **the world feels like it's crumbling** every day, another new something

(Bigger love, stanza 5, line 1)

This data is categorized as simile because the song writers compare two things, such as “world” and “its crumbling” This sentence used the word “like” to compare two different things. The word “world” means where we live or places where human activities can be carried out. So that is why the world disappoints you means we have to play our part and we have to save our world. Furthermore, according to oxford dictionary “crumbling” is breaking or into small pieces, especially as part of a breakdown process or breaking down gradually over a period of time.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974), this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. Literary this data means song writer the world is crumbling. However, connotatively this data means song writer describes a greater love for his girlfriend like the world is crumbling, no matter how much someone’s love will surely fall. It represents life of a songwriters because he feels sad or broke up with his girlfriend.

## **Data 2**

**I remember you and I was like lightning and thunder (Lightning and thunder)**  
Remember that night you met my daddy and mama (Daddy and mama)  
Got drunk for the first time, we laughed all summer  
(Remember us, stanza 15, and line 1)

This data is categorized as simile because the song writers compare two things, such as “You and I” and “lightning and thunder” This sentence used the word “like” to compare two different things. The word “You” means describes his girlfriend and “I” means describes songwriter himself. Furthermore, the word “lightning and thunder” means lightning and thunder usually come together its can come together can come different times. This is due to the difference between the speed of light and the speed of sound. The speed of light is much faster than the speed of sound. Therefore, lightning often strikes before the arrival of a loud sound or thunder.

Song lyric above has conceptual meaning and denotative meaning. The song lyric describes lighting and thunder. Conceptually, the “lighting” According to oxford dictionary is flash of bright light in the sky, produced by electricity. And “thunder” According to oxford dictionary is loud noise that follows a flash of lightning.

Furthermore, Based on the theory of Leech (1974) this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. The song lyrics describe “I was like lightning and thunder”. As we know the word “lightning and thunder” is means the songwriter represents her love with his girlfriend like lightning and thunder, which we never know when it will come, only when we hear the sound of lightning and thunder. Connectively, the word “lightning and thunder” means songwriter describes her love that cause rain from here he reminisces the past with his girlfriend when it rains. The meaning is the sentence above is song writer describe his girlfriend with lighting and thunder where he really misses someone who is always with him like lightning and thunder that always comes together.

### **Data 3**

**Hey, everybody has their days when the work feels like chains** when you're tryna  
shake it up and it still looks the same  
Oh, but I know I'm coming home to you, so I can't complain, no, no  
(Focused, stanza 2 line 1)

This data is categorized as simile because the song writers compare two things, such as “work” and “chains” this sentence use the word “like” to compare two different things. The word “work” in the dictionary means activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a purpose or result. Furthermore the word “chains” means a series of joints used to fasten or secure objects and to pull or support loads.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974) this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. The song lyrics above describes the work like a chains. The word “work” represents refers to the importance of an activity, time, and energy spent. The song lyrics describes a work that has no limit or does not run out. As we know the word “chains” is a series of joints used to fasten or support load, but in this song lyrics do not describes the chains itself but what identical to the chains. Connotatively, “chains” describes his work has no limit or is endless. The song lyrics describes chains like the work in human life which is interconnected in its cycle.

## **2. Metaphor**

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367), metaphor is an implied comparison, introduced by like or as omitted, comparison is made between two in like things that actually have something in common. In the other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or common characteristic.

### **Data 4**

No matter where I go anytime, any space  
**Say your lips are my favorite place**  
No matter where I go  
(Favorite place, stanza 2, line 3)

This data is categorized as a metaphor because the song writer compares two things such as “lips” and “favorite place” and by using to be. In this sentence the songwriter compares his girlfriend as a favorite place. And there are the sentence “lips” is a part of human body. In this sentence the songwriter compares his girlfriend with favorite place because he always needs his girlfriend so that his life has piece.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974) this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. The songwriter describe his girlfriend as the favorite place. The song lyric compares directly between “lips” and “favorite place”. As we know favorite place is a person or thing that is especially popular or particularly well like by someone. Connotatively, favorite place is represent of writer’s girlfriends as a favorite place he likes that can’t be left. The meaning of the

data above is the songwriter always gives his girlfriend a kiss which makes her his favorite place.

#### **Data 5**

Take, take, take time

#### **Fragile is my love**

I ain't never give' up

Give you my life, I would

(Don't walk away, S8, L2)

This data is categorized as a metaphor because the song writer compares two things such as “Fragile” and “my love” and by using to be. In this sentence the song writer compare his girlfriend as a fragile. The word “fragile” means easily broken or damaged. Furthermore, the word “my love” means a strong feeling of affection and concern to his girlfriend. In this sentence the song writer compares her love with his girlfriend with fragile because being fragile in a relationship allows partners to develop mutual trust.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974) this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. The song lyrics describes fragile is my love. Connotatively, the word “fragile” describe songwriter’s love with his girlfriend being fragile because if he was hurt then his heart is easily broken. In this case songwriter fights for his lover who almost broke up.

### **3. Personification**

Personification is giving human characteristics to an object, animal, or abstract idea. Personification is a metaphor of course, in the sense that there is implied comparison between a nonhuman thing and human being. (Knickerbocker and Reninger, (1963:367).

#### **Data 6**

We will never break

#### **As the water rises**

#### **And the mountains shake**

Our love will remain

(Never break, S3, L6)

This data is categorized as personification because this sentence is a giving characteristic of human being with non-human being. The word “water” is a colorless, transparent, odorless liquid that forms the ocean, lakes, rivers, and rain and is the basis of the fluids of living organisms. The word “mountain” is a large natural elevation of the earth's surface rising abruptly from the surrounding level; a large steep hill. As we know the word “rises” and “shake” only used for the human because the humans can do things like rises and shake.

This lyric categorized as a connotative meaning because the meaning beyond from literal meaning. Literary this sentence is the water rises and mountain shake means the songwriter does not want to break up with his girlfriend because the power of their love is very strong. Connotatively, song writer describe this sentence “water

rises” and “mountain shake” is relationship with his girlfriend who is facing problems that make him shaky but they always persist to overcome his problems and make the relationship stronger and last longer.

#### **Data 7**

Talk, let's have conversation in the dark

**World is sleeping**, I'm awake with you, with you

Watch the movies that we've both already seen

(Conversation in the dark, S1, L2)

This data is categorized as personification because this sentence is a giving characteristic of human being with non-human being. The word “world” is interpreted as nonhuman but the character is like a human being. “World” means where we live or places where human activities can be carried out. So that is why the world disappoints you means we have to play our part and we have to save our world. Furthermore “sleeping” means is state, or condition of being sleep. As we know the activity of sleeping only done by humans.

This lyric categorized as a connotative meaning because the meaning beyond from literal meaning. The songwriter describes world is sleeping. Although the reality is the world cannot sleeping because it is thing. The songwriters describes the world in this song lyrics as the human that can sleeping. Connotatively, the word “world” means describe about their love. The meaning in this sentence, the word “world” describes into the song writer itself because he is always awake when his girlfriend is sleeping.

#### **4. Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is a figure of speech that used a part of the whole, (Knickerbocker and Reninger, 1963:367). In other word synecdoche changes some detail of an experience for the experience itself. In Justin Bieber album Changes songs, it is found four sentence that is classified as synecdoche, there are:

#### **Data 8**

Every other word coming from my pen

**She throw back in my face, saying “where you been?”**

I sound so poetic, but it feels like I let it slip away, slip away

(Action, stanza 1, line 6)

The data above categorized as synecdoche because use the part to explain whole. The word "throw" means to be sent through the air with some force, especially the movement of the hand. Also, the word "face" is a part of the human body. In the lyrics above, "throw in my face" means that someone has said or done something rude or unkind.

The data above as a connotative meaning because the meaning beyond from literal meaning. Face in the dictionary means that it is part of the human body. In this case “face” sentence is represents songwriter rejecting something girlfriend has said or done in an impolite way. In this case the author wants to describe a love story that

runs out of patience and he doesn't need it anymore, and tried to apologize for what I did but he just throw my apology in my face.

### 5. Hyperbole

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) hyperbole is a figure of an exaggeration used for special effect.

#### Data 9

You know I'm romantic

**I'd cross the Atlantic for that, "Ooh-laa"**

I'll wear my best tuxedo

And you can undress me and we go, "Ooh-laa"

(Ooh laa, stanza 4, line 1, 2)

This data is categorized as hyperbole because this sentence gives an exaggerated statement. This data categorize as hyperbole since the sentence "I'd cross the Atlantic for that". As we know human cannot across the Atlantic because humans cannot swim across the Atlantic. In this sentence the songwriters just represents his feelings that he can do anything for his girlfriend.

This lyric categorized as a connotative meaning because the meaning beyond from literal meaning. Literary this sentence is "I'd cross the Atlantic for that". As we know cross Atlantic means describes songwriter feeling of his girlfriend. In the song lyric is implied songwriter feeling situation. Connotatively, "Atlantic" in this sentence is not represent Atlantic itself but represent the state of the song writer feelings. The meaning of the lyric is the author wants to describe his feelings and have strong self-confidence.

#### Data 10

On

Sunday mornings we sleep in till noon

**Well, I can sleep forever next to you**

Next to you

(Conversation in the dark, S4, L1)

This data is categorized as hyperbole because this sentence gives an exaggerated statement. This data categorize as hyperbole since it is an illogical statement. The sentence "I can sleep forever next to you" means he wants to live together with his girlfriend in good and bad situation.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974) this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. As we know the sentence "sleep forever" means people who are dead or in final rest. Connotatively this data means the songwriter wants to always be with his girlfriend until death do them apart. In this sentence the song writer describe his girlfriend as a friend of life until death.



### **Data 11**

#### **Got drunk for the first time, we laughed all summer**

Laughed at Martin, we starved, it was part of the come up Actin' juvenile to Juvenile,  
backin' it up Actin' a nut in the Acura, the number one stunna (*Oh yeah, yeah*)  
(Remember us, S15, L3)

This data is categorized as hyperbole because this sentence gives an exaggerated statement. This data categorize as hyperbole since. The sentence “Got drunk for the first time, we laughed all summer” as we know humans cannot laughed all summer but in this sentence means songwriter describe happiness with his girlfriend for the one summer.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974) this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. As we know the sentence “we laughed all summer” is something not human can do. Because laughed is just a momentary expression when someone feels happy or something is funny. Connotatively, laughed all summer is it represent togetherness and happiness of the song writers with his girlfriend. The meaning in this sentence is song writer describe together with his girlfriend is very happy during the summer.

### **6. Paradox**

Paradox is a statement of which the surface or obvious meaning seems to be illogical, even absurd but making good sense upon closer examination (Knickerbocker and Renninger, 1963: 367).

### **Data 13**

I remember you the same  
**You made me laugh ‘til we cried**  
Had knots in our stomachs  
(Remember us, S15, L12)

This data categorize as a paradox because this data a statement of which surface, on obvious meaning seems to be illogical, even absurd, but making good sense upon closer examination. From that sentence, the word “laugh” and “cried” are a paradox because the statement is showing the contradiction. The word “laugh” means is spontaneous movements of the face and body that are instinctive expressions of live entertainment. Furthermore the word “cried” means is shed tears, typically as an expression of distress, pain, or sorrow.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974) this data belongs to connotative meaning since the sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. Laugh and cried is something that tells happiness and sadness. But in lyric “you made me laugh till we cried” is not explain sadness but explains the happiness of the songwriter, where when someone laughs can bring tears. “Cried” in this sentence describe expression and “laugh” is representative of his happiness. In this case the song writer describe when his girlfriend make something funny and laugh to the point of tears. The message of this statement is the song writer describe happiness with his girlfriend.

## Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the writer concluded that the figurative language used in the song lyric of John Legend album “Bigger Love”, consists of six types of figurative language such as Simile, metaphor, Personification, Synecdoche, Hyperbole, and Paradox. The writer found six data of figurative language. There are three sentences identified as simile, two sentences identified as metaphore, two sentences identified as personification, one sentence identified as synecdoche, three sentences identified as hyperbole, and one sentence identified as paradox. The writer used the theory from Leech (1981), from the six types of meaning the writer analyzed two types of meaning which are conceptual meaning and connotative meaning. Based on the data above, the writer concluded that the song lyric of John Legend album “Bigger Love” used figure of speech to convey implicit messages and hidden life values.

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